

# George West Elementary School Student Handbook



*\*\*\*Please refer to the GWISD's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19 guidelines for the school district.\*\*\**

## **2023 - 2024**

It is the policy of the George West ISD not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, religion, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

George West ISD no discrimina por motivos de edad, raza, religion, color, origen natal, sexo o necesidades especiales (incapacidades) en sus programas, servicios o actividades vocacionales, tal como lo requieren el Titulo VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Titulo IX de las Emmiendas de la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección de la Ley de Rehabilitacion de 1973, según enmienda.



# George West Independent School District 2023-2024 School Calendar



**Board Approved March 22, 2023**

July 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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30	31					

August 2023						
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27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023						
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October 2023						
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November 2023						
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December 2023						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- School Holiday
- Teacher Work Day (Student Holiday)
- Staff Development Day (Stu. Holiday)
- Bad Weather Day
- Early Release Day
- Beginning of Six Weeks
- End of Six Weeks
- STAAR Test Days
- End of Course Test Days
- Graduation
- No School
- Intervention/ Out Day

- School Holidays**
- Labor Day September 4, 2023
  - Thanksgiving November 20-24, 2023
  - Christmas Dec 21, 2023-Jan 4, 2024
  - Fair Week Feb 26-Mar 1, 2024
  - Spring Break March 4-8, 2024
  - Good Friday March 29, 2024
  - Memorial Day May 27, 2024

- Teacher Work Days**
- August 1, 2023
  - November 3, 2023
  - January 5, 2024
  - May 31, 2024

- Staff Development Days**
- August 2-4, 7-9, 2023
  - September 22, 2023
  - October 20, 2023
  - February 19, 2024
  - April 19, 2024

- Bad Weather Days**
- November 20, 21 2023
  - March 7, 8 2024

- Early Release Days**
- December 20, 2023
  - May 30, 2024

- Grading Period**
- First Semester 78
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Six Weeks 29
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Six Weeks 24
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Six Weeks 25
  - Second Semester, 81
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Six Weeks 25
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Six Weeks 32
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Six Weeks 24

159 days x 485 minutes = 77,115 (7:55 am- 4:00 pm)  
 State Required Minutes = 75,600  
 Bank= 3 days (1,515 minutes)  
 173 Teacher Days

- School Schedule**
- Primary 7:40 am to 3:45 pm
  - Elementary 7:55 am to 4:00 pm
  - Jr. High 7:55 am to 4:00 pm
  - High School 7:55 am to 4:00 pm

January 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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February 2024						
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March 2024						
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31						

April 2024						
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28	29	30				

May 2024						
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June 2024						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Early Release Schedule: All Campuses @ 12 noon  
 Buses Run: Primary @ 12:15 pm  
 Elementary, JH & HS @ 12:30 pm

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## **PREFACE STUDENTS AND PARENTS:**

Welcome to the new school year!

Education is a team effort, and students, parents, teachers, and other staff members working together can make this a successful year.

The George West High School office personnel includes:

Mrs. Marianne Peters, Principal

Mrs. Sabrina Ramon, Principal's Secretary

Mrs. Nicole Galloway, Counselor

Mrs. Tracey Arciba, Attendance Clerk

The school office is open from 7:45 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. We will stay late or come early with prior notification in an attempt to accommodate parents and students. The office phone is 361-449-1914, select option elementary school menu or dial extension 1043 or 1044; Our address is 910 Houston Street, George West, Texas 78022.

The George West High School Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

**Section One: Parental Rights** will help you respond to school-related issues regarding curriculum and the school environment.

**Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students** is organized alphabetically by topic. Where applicable, it is divided by age and/or grade level.

**Note:** Unless otherwise noted, the term "parent," refers to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of a student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to align with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct, a board-adopted document intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere of learning. The Student Handbook is **not** meant to be a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules in any given circumstance.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any Student Handbook provisions, the district will follow board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the George West ISD Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district's website at [www.gwisd.us](http://www.gwisd.us). State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

The Student Handbook is updated annually; however, policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletters and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create any additional rights for parents and students. It does not, nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district.

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at the reception desk at George West High School.

**Note:** References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at [www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/149901/](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/149901/).

The policy manual includes:

Legally referenced (LEGAL) policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts.

Board-adopted (LOCAL) policies that articulate the board's choices and values regarding district practices.

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1042

Complete and return to the student's campus the following forms (provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment):

Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook Form;

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information form;

Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education, if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities; and

Consent/Opt-Out Form.

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 6 and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey** on page 7 for more information.]

## **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1042

## Section One: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

### Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

#### Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent.

**Note:** An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

#### Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

##### *Annual Notification*

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

In George West ISD the human sexuality curriculum used is "Choosing the Best Journey" provided by the Community in Schools prevention program.

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. (See the campus principal for details.)
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** on page 40 and FNG(LOCAL),

State law also requires that instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

### ***Consent Before Instruction***

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction.

### **Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service**

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The district's mental health liaison will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

Comprehensive school mental health services are essential to creating and sustaining safe schools. Increased access to mental health services in schools is vital to improving the physical and psychological safety of our students and schools, as well as academic performance and problem-solving skills. Our procedures include screening/identification, this can be made by a teacher, nurse, or counselor who observes a child in need of services. Parents will be notified and consulted. After a student is identified referrals can begin. Curriculum is based upon the students need and development which include preventive measures of instruction, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and establish school based health information. This is an opportunity where students of all income levels can seek physical and mental health information so they can receive services to meet their needs with either district personnel or outside community providers.

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison can be reached at

Mrs. Kristy Orr

George West ISD LSSP

Special Education Building

korr@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1051.

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

For further information, see **Mental Health Support** on page 75.

### **Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information**

Teachers may display a students' work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- Artwork
- Special projects
- Photographs
- Original videos or voice recordings, and
- Other original works.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student’s work on the district’s website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom website, or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

**Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if Student is Under Age 14**

A student under the age of 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district’s parenting and paternity awareness program. This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

**Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Already Permitted by Law**

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in person, may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the teacher or other school official.

**Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling a student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO(LOCAL).

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student’s parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child must return the form included in the forms packet. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

**Note:**

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student's caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

**Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees**

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of the professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.

The employee is required to include the student's parent as a recipient on all text messages.

The employee is required to send a copy of the text message to the employee's district email address.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

**Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent.

"Directory information" is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student's photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- A student's name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);
- A list of student birthdays (for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition);
- A student's name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and -managed social media platform); and
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period.)

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.



However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing, photograph, date of birth, major field of study, degrees, honors, awards, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended, enrollment status, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams. If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child's information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: student name and address. If a parent does not object to the use of the student's information for these purposes, the school **must** release this information when requested from an outside entity or individual.

Note: Review Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records on page 11.

### **Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

Unless a parent has advised he district not to release his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests by military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student's:

- Name,
- Address, and
- Telephone listing.

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address, unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

[See **Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**, included in the forms packet.]

### **Participation in Third-Party Surveys**

#### ***Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey***

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PRPA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

A parent has the right to consent before a student is required to submit to a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns any of the following protected areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
- Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility for a program.

A parent can inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

### ***“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information***

The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information to others.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.
- Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]
- A parent may inspect:
  - Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
  - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.
- The ED provides extensive information about the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, including a PPRA Complaint Form.

### **Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component of Instruction**

See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 3 for information on a parent’s right to remove a student from any part of the district’s human sexuality instruction.

### **Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12**

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes provide:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution, and
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3-12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U. S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

### **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 88 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

### **Religious or Moral Beliefs**

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the student must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

### **Tutoring or Test Preparation**

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

- Informal observations,
- Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or
- Results from diagnostic assessments.

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

Under state law, students with grades below 70 for a reporting period are required to attend tutorial services—if the district offers these services. Coaches understand this necessity and will accommodate to facilitate the student’s academic success.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, see policies EC and EHBC, and contact the student’s teacher.]

## **Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records/Policies**

### **Instructional Materials**

A parent has a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

### **Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent**

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child’s misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

### **Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments**

In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state or district policy related to his or her child’s participation in required assessments.

### **Student Records**

#### ***Accessing Student Records***

A parent may review his or her child’s records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,

- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term “intervention strategy” is defined by law,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child’s classroom.

***Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 6, are the right to:

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA.
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements.
- For more information about how to file a complaint, see <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>.

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing personally identifiable information from a student’s records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance--including grades, test results, and disciplinary records--is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parents unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records. A parent’s rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent’s marital status.

Federal law requires control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

- Reaches the age of 18,
- Is emancipated by a court, or

- Enrolls in a postsecondary institution.

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student:

- When district school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.
  - Legitimate educational interest may include:
    - Working with the student;
    - Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
    - Compiling statistical data;
    - Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
    - Investigating or evaluating programs.
  - School officials would include:
    - Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
    - Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or district medical staff);
    - A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
    - A person appointed to serve on a school committee to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
    - A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
    - A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.

- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the district discloses directory information--designated details. [To prohibit this disclosure, see **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 6.]

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students at:

Mrs. Sabrina Ramon

GWES Registrar

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[sramon@gwisd.us](mailto:sramon@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1043

You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at:

Mrs. Regan McPike

GWISD Records Specialist

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[rmcpike@gwisd.us](mailto:rmcpike@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1007

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See Finality of Grades at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 90, and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 40.]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at [George West ISD](#).

**Note:** The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available.

### **Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications**

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether a teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and
- Is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification.
- The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

### **A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances**

#### **Children of Military Families**

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements;
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities;
- Enrollment in the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN); and
- Graduation requirements.

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:



- Called to active duty,
- On leave, or
- Returning from a deployment of at least four months.
- The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

## **Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments**

### ***Multiple Birth Siblings***

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

### ***Safety Transfers/Assignments***

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** on page 29, policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

- The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.
- [See policy FDE for more information.]
- The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a neighboring district if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

### **Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal**

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on

campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days.

### **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)**

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course.

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside of the district's or school's attendance boundaries--or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries--is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of any applications for admission or financial aid;
- Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits;
- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships;
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy;
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of any examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 46, **Course Credit** on page 46, and **Students in Foster Care** on page 100 for more information.]

### **A Student Who Is Homeless**

A student who is homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;

- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.
- Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in what is called the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 46, **Course Credit** on page 46, and **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 100 for more information.]

### **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

#### ***Special Education Referrals***

If a parent makes a **written request** for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than **15 school days** after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to

evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

**Note:** A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an **exception** to the 45-school day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is

Mrs. Nicole Galloway

GWES Counselor

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

ngalloway@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1045

For questions regarding post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services, contact the district's transition and employment designee:

Mrs. Ethel Murphy

GWISD Diagnostician

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

emurphy@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1008

### ***Section 504 Referrals***

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:

- Notice,
- An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records,
- An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and
- A review procedure.

### ***Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals***

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is

Mrs. Nicole Galloway

GWES Counselor

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

ngalloway@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1045

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 20.]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

### ***Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Student in General Education***

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

### ***A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home***

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the

household be transferred to the same campus--if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to the other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

### **A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English**

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

[See **English Learners** on page 56 and **Special Programs** on page 98.]

### **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504**

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law--and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services--may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 17 and policy FB for more information.]

## **Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students**

This section contains important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements.

It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Parents and children should take a moment to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the principal.

### **Absences/Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's education. The student and parent should avoid unnecessary absences.

Two important state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with how attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are discussed below.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

#### ***Ages 6—18***

State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, shall attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended-year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program before or after school or during the summer if the student does not meet the passing standards on an applicable subject area state assessment.

#### ***Age 19 and Older***

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If the student incurs more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA for more information.]

### **Compulsory Attendance – Exemptions**

#### ***All Grade Levels***

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;

- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for related to autism services, if the student returns to school on the same day of the appointment and brings a note from the health-care provider;
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student’s attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments. [See **Children of Military Families** on page 14 for more information.]

**Secondary Grade Levels**

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver’s license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of his or her visit to the driver’s license office for each absence and must make up any work missed.

[See **Driver License Attendance Verification** on page 25.]

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per year to visit a college or university, provided:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL);
- The principal has approved the student’s absence; and
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit, and makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as:

- An early voting clerk, provided the district’s board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; or
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.



## **Compulsory Attendance – Failure to Comply**

### ***All Grade Levels***

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law.

A student absent without permission from school; any class; any required special program, or any required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

### ***Ages 6—18***

When a student ages 6-18 incurs three or more unexcused absences within a four-week period, the law requires the school to send notice to the parent.

The notice will:

- Remind the parent of his or her duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school;
- Request a conference between school administrators and the parent; and
- Inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures, including a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, referrals counseling or other social services, or other appropriate measures.

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is

Carlos Castillejos

School Resource Officer

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

ccastillejos@gwisd.us

361-449-1914

For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student age 12-18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

## **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days may receive credit or a final grade if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the class's instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

If a student attends fewer than 75 percent of the class days or does not complete the principal-approved plan, then the attendance review committee will determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [See policy FEC for more information.]

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, whether excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences listed under **Compulsory Attendance – Exemptions** on page 21 will be considered extenuating circumstances.
- A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- Absences incurred due to the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances if the student makes up the work missed in each class.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reason for the student's absences
- The committee will review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the student or the student's parent had any control over the absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

## **Official Attendance-Taking Time**

The district will take official attendance every day at 10:00 a.m.

A student absent for any portion of the day, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

### **Documentation after an Absence**

A parent must provide an explanation for any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent. In emergency situations, a parent email will suffice. All notes must be turned in within 3 days of the students return. Notes will not be accepted after the 3 days.

A note signed by the student will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

The campus will document in its attendance records whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

**Note:** The district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence, unless the absence is an exemption under compulsory attendance laws.

### **Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness**

Within 3 days of returning to school, a student absent for more than 3 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence to determine whether an absence will be excused or unexcused.

### ***Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment***

If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

See **Compulsory Attendance – Exemptions** on page 21 for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner license or driver's license.

### **Accountability Under State and Federal Law**

George West ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA;
- The district's financial management report, which includes the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA; and

- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Accountability information can be found on the district's website at [www.gwisd.us](http://www.gwisd.us). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](#).

## **Awards and Honors**

### **Honor Roll**

#### ***All-A Honor Roll***

To be named to the All-A Honor Roll, a student must receive an average of 90 or above in all courses taken.

#### ***A-B Honor Roll***

To be named to the A-B Honor Roll a student must receive an average of 90 or above in at least two academic courses and a grade no lower than 80 in any course taken.

Non-academic courses for honor roll purposes are: physical education, ensembles, and office, library, counselor or teacher aide.

## **Bullying**

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a respectful school climate; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property; or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.
- Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined by state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of:
  - A cellular or other type of telephone
  - A computer
  - A camera

- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An Internet website
- Any other Internet-based communication tool.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions
- Name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism.

The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.

Students in secondary grades will participate in:

- Instruction on the brain's ability to change and grow so the student recognizes bullying behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an unchangeable trait
- Discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and a means for attaining or maintaining social status at school, and that discourage students from using bullying as a tool for social status
- Instruction designed so that students recognize the role that reporting bullying behaviors plays in promoting a safe school community

The district will use an age-appropriate survey regarding school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns.

Each campus has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact the campus principal.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by completing the appropriate form found on the district's website at [www.gwisd.us](http://www.gwisd.us) under "Quick Links", see "Report a Bully".

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

If an investigation determines that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying.

Available counseling options will be provided to the affected individuals, including any student who witnessed to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the board may transfer the student to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 15.]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook as an appendix.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 15, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47, **Hazing** on page 72, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## **Celebrations**

Although a parent or grandparent may provide food to share for a school-designated function or for a student's birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss any classroom allergies with the teacher before bringing food to share.

Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers to provide food.

[See **Food Allergies** on page 78.]

## **Child Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [GWISD District Improvement Plan](#). Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

### **Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral, or emotional warning signs, including:

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior; or
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47.]

### **Warning Signs of Trafficking**

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently make contact with victims online.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude;
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- Tattoos or branding;
- Refillable gift cards;
- Frequent runaway episodes;

- Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone;
- Unexplained injuries;
- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips;
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit;
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students;
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off;
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;
- Not being in control of his or her own money;
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

### **Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, it is important to be calm and comforting if your child or another child confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)).



## Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](#)
- [Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](#)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](#)
- [Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault](#)
- [National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking](#)

## Transferred Grades

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the Regular category and the District as accepted the credit, the District shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank.

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the District's weighted grade system, the District shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District only if the same or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the District.

- Communications

## Parent Contact Information

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two week after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district.

If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the information in writing no more than two weeks after the date the information changes.

A parent may update contact information by emailing the school registrar at [sfreeman@gwisd.us](mailto:sfreeman@gwisd.us).

## Automated Emergency Communications

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

[See **Safety** on page 91 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

## **Automated Nonemergency Communications**

Your child's school periodically sends information by automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related to the school's mission and specific to your child, your child's school, or the district.

Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply.

If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety** on page 91 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

## **Complaints and Concerns**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at <https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/827>. The complaint forms can be accessed online at [www.gwisd.us](http://www.gwisd.us) or at the principal's or superintendent's office.

- To file a formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form.
- In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.
- If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may request a conference with the superintendent.
- If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

## **Conduct**

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Whenever a student is caught in academic dishonesty, the teacher will:

- Assess the student a grade reduction penalty
- Submit a discipline referral to the office.
- Contact the parents.
- Those students found to be guilty of academic dishonesty are not eligible for class or club leadership positions during the applicable school year.

### **Applicability of School Rules**

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior—on and off campus during remote and in-person instruction, and on district vehicles—and outlines consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

During summer instruction, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the school year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction. Athletic programs may have additional standards, but do not replace District or Campus rules.

### **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at [www.gwisd.us](http://www.gwisd.us) and the coordinator for this campus is listed below:

- Mrs. Marianne Peters
- GWES Principal
- 910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
- [mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)
- 361-449-1914, extension 1042

### **Deliveries**

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

### **Disruption of School Operations**

Disruption of school operations is not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator

Disruption of classes or other school activities while on or within 500 feet of district property includes:

- Making loud noises;
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and
- Entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

### **Recreational Items**

Skateboards and skates are not allowed on campus at any time. Bicycles must be secured during the day. Athletic equipment such as bats, tennis rackets, etc., are not allowed in the classroom or hallways and must be secured in an athletic locker or checked into the high school office.

### **Social Events**

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

A parent interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events should contact the campus principal.

### **Counseling**

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives;
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development; and
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum, available to parents to review during school hours.

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should make an appointment with the GWHS receptionist or attendance clerk. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

[See **Mental Health Support** on page 75 and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children** on page 32, and **Dating Violence** on page 47.]

### **Course Credit**

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above, and the attendance requirement is met. See **Attendance for Credit**. If the student's combined average is less than 70, or the attendance requirement has not been met, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

### **Credit by Examination—If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (Grades 6-12)**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject.

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

If a student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

### **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject**

A student will be permitted to earn credit by examination for an academic course or subject area for which the student had no prior instruction for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level.

The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

The only exceptions to the published testing windows will be for any examinations administered by another entity or to accommodate a student experiencing homelessness or a student involved in the foster care system.

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

### **Students in Grades 6–12**

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with:

- A passing score of at least 80 on the examination approved by the board; or
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable.

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course. Depending on the student's course for which the student seeks to earn credit by exam, an end-of-course assessment (EOC) may be required for graduation.

### **Credit Recovery**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal, be permitted to earn credit by retaking the course via a credit recovery program determined by the school. *Students making less than a 50 in the previously taken course must re-take the course in the classroom setting.* Students who meet the requirements of the credit recovery program will receive credit for the course and will receive a 70 for official transcript records. The original course grade will be used for any class rank and GPA purposes. A student will not be allowed to gain credit for a course through credit recovery, if they have not passed the corresponding STAAR End-Of-Course Exam.

### **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

Students learn best, and their welfare is best served, in a school environment that is free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Students are expected to treat peers and district employees with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behaviors, and stop those behaviors as directed. District employees are likewise expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the [district's website](#). [See policy FFH for more information.]

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This type of conduct is considered harassment if it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's

ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or sexual assaults;
- Name-calling;
- Put-downs;
- Threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household;
- Destroying property belonging to the student;
- Threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship;
- Threats to harm a student's past or current dating partner;
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family;
- Stalking; or
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

A flier from the Texas Attorney General's office includes information on recognizing and responding to dating violence, including contact information for help. The counselor's office has additional information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help.

For more information on dating violence, see the CDC's Preventing Teen Dating Violence.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation;
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct;
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors;
- Physical aggression or assault;
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

## **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature;
- Sexual advances;
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and
- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on a student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.

Gender-based harassment can occur regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors;
- Physical aggression or assault;
- Threatening or intimidating conduct; or
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good-faith report or participates in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, or dating violence is prohibited. A person who makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]



Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See **Bullying** on page 29.]

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

### **Investigation of Report**

Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student. However, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

### **Discrimination**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47.]

### **Distance Learning**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to district students are **GradPoint** or similar educational programs.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

[See **Remote Instruction** on page 89.]

### **Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN)**

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TXVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 59.] In addition, a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

A parent may ask questions or request that their child be enrolled in a TXVSN course by contacting the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the George West ISD, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

A copy of policy EHDE addressing distance learning will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year. If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact the school counselor.

### **Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents**

#### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, newspapers, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, etc.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

#### **Non-school Materials**

##### ***From Students***

Students must obtain prior approval from the campus principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

The principal has designated the bulletin bars in the hallways as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

### ***From Others***

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post on any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by policy GKDA.

To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA or GF for more information.]

The principal has designated the Commons Area as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

## **George West Elementary School Dress Code**

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, minimizes safety hazards, and maintains a positive learning climate. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

### **Clothing**

- 1) Pants or shorts will be appropriately sized and worn at a natural waistline (no sagging or bagging). **Legging/tights**, cotton sweat pants, biker or spandex shorts, breakaway pants, wind shorts, joggers, wind pants, short shorts, and cutoffs **will not** be allowed. Girls may wear leggings or jeggings, if worn under a dress or tunic meeting the fingertip length requirement. Pants with holes exposing skin above the knee (this includes garments worn under pants) will not be allowed. Hems of shorts, skorts, culottes, skirts, and dresses will be no shorter than 2 ½ inches (the width of a dollar bill) when measured from the top of the kneecap. Slits in dresses, skirts, shorts, skorts, culottes and pants are considered part of the hemline and must not exceed the 2-½ inches above the kneecap. (Slits are any vertical openings extending upward from the hemline front, back, sides or any other hemline placement.) Shorts are to be worn at the hem and not rolled up.
  - a. The only exception to athletic wear will be Physical Education Classes (short shorts and bike shorts will not be allowed)

- b. Shirts and short colors will be outlined in PE. NO WHITE SHIRTS will be allowed in PE/Pre Athletics
- 2) Student shirts may be un-tucked if: when standing and arms extended to their side, the shirt does not extend past the top of the palm of the student's hand or when their arms are raised the shirt does not rise above the jeans showing the stomach. Female blouses designed to be worn at or just below the beltline may be left out if no midriff is exposed.
- 3) Males: Shirts will be appropriately sized, buttoned and with sleeves.
- 4) Females: Shirts will be appropriately sized and buttoned. Straps on tops must be at least 1 1/2 inches wide. Halters, strapless garments, tank tops, mesh see-through tops and clothes that expose the midriff or back will not be allowed. No cleavage should be visible. Undergarments cannot be visible.
- 5) Coats, jackets, and protective weather garments shall be worn as appropriate to the environment. **Jacket hoods** will not be worn inside. Dusters or trench coats and are not allowed.
- 6) Clothing containing obscene slogans, gang-related identifying emblems or symbols, advertisements for tobacco, alcoholic beverages, gruesome blood, drug paraphernalia, weapons, or sexual innuendoes are not allowed. Should PPE masks be required, the same standards apply.
- 7) Students must wear appropriate footwear.
  - a. Tennis or Athletic Shoes only for PE

### **Headwear**

- 1) Caps or hats **or beanies** will not be allowed.
- 2) Bandannas or headbands will not be allowed.
- 3) Sunglasses or sunshades are not to be worn in the building.

### **Hair:**

- 1) Hair must be neatly groomed. No extreme hairstyles such as mohawks, carvings, spikes, tails, pony tails (boys), shaved or partially shaved heads will be allowed. No extreme variations of hair length and/or abnormal (pink, green, blue, purple, orange, silver, etc.) hair color will be permitted. No artificial extensions including feathers, tinsel, colored strands. **Boys hair may be worn no lower than to the bottom of the ear lobe or the bottom of the collar of a dress shirt and may not cover the eyebrow or be in the eyes at any time during the school day.**
- 2) Boys must be clean-shaven...no mustaches, beards, or goatees will be allowed.
- 3) Sideburns will not extend past the bottom of the earlobe.
- 4) Eyebrows will not be carved or notched.

### **Accessories:**

- 1) Boys will not be allowed to wear earrings or gauges.

- 2) Girls may wear a maximum of three earrings in each ear. Spikes and gauges are not allowed.
- 3) Body piercing jewelry and/or accessories will not be allowed (including but not limited to spikes, nose, lips eyebrows, etc.).
- 4) Heavy chains or accessories with spikes will not be allowed.
- 5) Any accessory that may cause injury will not be allowed.
- 6) No theatrical contact lenses may be worn.

***Make-up:***

- 1) Extreme make-up will not be allowed.
- 2) Boys may not wear make-up or **nail polish**.
- 3) Tattoos and brands must be covered at all times.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

## **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources**

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices**

The district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. [For graphing calculator applications on computing devices, see **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials** on page 102.]

A student must have approval to possess other personal telecommunications devices on campus such as laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact the parents to pick up the items.

The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

Any telecommunication device, including cell phones, must be **turned off** and **out of sight** from 7:45 a.m. - 12:19 p.m. and 12:54 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. (7:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 12:35 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays). If a student must use their cell phone or any other telecommunication device, they must proceed to the office to obtain permission and then, with permission, the student may use the cell phone or any other telecommunication device in the office. Failure to follow this policy will result in the following consequences:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: cell phone, or any other telecommunication device, is collected from the student and held until the end of the day at which time the cell phone, or any other

telecommunication device, will be returned to the student. A “\$15 fine warning” will be issued concerning the potential 2<sup>nd</sup> offense.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: the cell phone, or any other telecommunication device in violation of policy, will be collected from the student and the parent or guardian will be notified. The item will be collected and the student must pay a fine of \$15 to have the phone returned.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: each subsequent violation will result in collection of the cell phone, or any other telecommunication device in violation of policy, and a \$15 fine before the phone is returned to the student. Excessive violations may result in the confiscation of the electronic device for the remainder of the semester or school year.

**Cell phones are prohibited during standardized testing. All cell phones and smart watches must be given to the testing instructor at the beginning of the testing session or not brought to school at all. Any cell phone violation must be reported to TEA.**

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student’s parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student’s personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches on page 98 and policy FNF for more information.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook).

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Any use of a cell phone or other electronic device during testing **of any kind** will be considered cheating and handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

District-owned technology resources may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the district’s network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on district-owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content—commonly referred to as “sexting,”—will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage parents to review with their child [‘Before You Text’ Sexting Prevention Course](#), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of sexting.

Any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district’s computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

### **Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels)**

A student who is an emergent bilingual student is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative, will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student’s parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student’s level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student’s continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 99, may be administered to an English learner up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student’s LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English learner and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student’s ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

### **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations**

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships. Participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Students may not attend any extracurricular, club, or academic field trips, conferences or competitions while failing any academic classes or if they have been absent more than 10% of scheduled school classes. The activity sponsor is responsible for obtaining current grades from the campus Registrar.



Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation** on page 102.]

Eligibility for many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL), a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students and parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at [UIL Parent Information Manual](#). A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.texas.gov](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See [UIL Texas](#) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. Parents are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

- Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) course, or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.
- If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sightreading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance, but is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.
- In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:
  - A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
  - An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
  - A student is allowed in a school year up to 15 absences not related to post-district competition, and there is no limit for post-district or state competition. These include, but are not limited to, livestock shows, fairs, rodeos, 4-H, sport outside of school, etc. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
  - An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will be considered an unexcused absence.



## **Standards of Behavior**

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

## **Student Clubs and Organizations on Campus**

### ***Student Council***

The Student Council is an organization of students whose members are elected by their class to represent them at council meetings. Its primary aim is to develop in the students a deeper realization of their part in building and maintaining a good school.

### ***UIL Club***

The purpose of the UIL Club is to promote and support students and sponsors in their efforts to form a competitive team for UIL Academic competition.

## Grading Scale

The following numerical grading system will be used in George West High School:

90-100 .....	Indicates Excellent Achievement (A)
80-89 .....	Indicates Good Achievement (B)
70-79 .....	Indicates Passing Achievement(C)
69 and below .....	Indicates Failing (F)

Numerical grades earned in honors courses (including dual credit college courses that are George West High School has adopted the following campus grading guidelines:

- Major Grades = 60% of the Marking Period Average
- Minor Grades = 40% of the Marking Period Average

Assignments which constitute Major work and Minor work will be determined at teacher discretion and will be published/communicated before the work is assigned.

## Exam Grades Below 70

All students have the opportunity to have a lesson re-taught and to take a re-test if they score below a 70 on that exam. A grade of 70 will be the highest grade achievable.

Reteaching and retesting for the entire class must occur if 50% of a class fails a test. A curve will not be applied.

## Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades may be given in cases where a student was ill for a prolonged period. In such cases the teacher will record an "I". The "I" or incomplete grade must be made up and a numerical grade recorded before the next reporting period.

AN "I" GIVEN FOR ANY OTHER REASON MUST BE MADE UP WITHIN FIVE (5) SCHOOL DAYS OF THE END OF THE SIX-WEEKS MARKING PERIOD AND THE TEACHER MUST REPORT SUCH COMPLETION TO THE REGISTRAR IMMEDIATELY.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 91 for additional information on grading guidelines.]

## Harassment

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47.]

## Hazing

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to

the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquid, drugs, or other substances;

- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; and
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

The district will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[See **Bullying** on page 29 and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

## **Health – Physical and Mental**

### **Illness**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day.

State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 24 hours.

A parent should contact the school nurse if a student has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or may have COVID-19.

A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, and the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent. When a child becomes ill at school, and must be sent home, parent/guardian must pick up the child within one hour of notification.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

### **Immunization**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized.

For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the

district. This form may be obtained online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#) or by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Meningococcal
- Hepatitis A

The school nurse can provide information on immunization requirements. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 78, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this or other vaccination requirements.

[See the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements](#) and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for further information.]

## **Lice**

Head lice is very common among children. Although not an illness or a disease, it spreads easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

The district does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](#).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

### **Medicine at School**

If a student must take medication during school hours, the student's parent must provide the medication. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and be administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee. A student may be authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees may administer:

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

At the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.

If sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

### **Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions**

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her health-care provider and the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

See also **Food Allergies** on page 78.

### **Steroids**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician-prescribed medical use only

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

### **Mental Health Support**

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

The George West Independent School District will provide mental health education, including education about mental health conditions, mental health well-being, skills to manage emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making for all students in the district as required by policy. The District will adopt and utilize the latest research and effective programs to address student needs.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the district's mental health liaison for further information.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFEB for further information.]

For related information, see:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation or Provide a Mental Health Care Service** on pages 3-4 for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** on page 45 for the district's comprehensive school counseling program;
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on page 79 for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** on page 79 for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

## **Physical Activity Requirements**

### **Kinder garten-grade 5**

The TEC §28.002(l) requires students enrolled in full-day prekindergarten, in kindergarten, or in a grade level below grade six to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year as part of the district's physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school campus's daily recess. To the extent practicable, a school district shall require a student enrolled in prekindergarten on less than a full-day basis to participate in the same type and amount of physical activity as a student enrolled in full-day prekindergarten.

### ***Junior High/Middle School***

The district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

For additional information on the district's junior high and middle school student physical activity programs and requirements, please see the principal.

## **Physical Activity Requirements**

### ***Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education***

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in the skill demonstration but will remain in the class and shall continue to learn the concepts of the lessons.

## **Physical Fitness Assessment**

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year by contacting:

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1042

## **Physical Health Screenings/Examinations**

### ***Athletics Participation***

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- A district athletics program.
- District marching band.
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent.

This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During the alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to his or her required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](#) for more information.

### ***Spinal Screening Program***

School-based spinal screenings helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature at an early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted in accordance with the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, contact the superintendent or see policy FFAA(LEGAL).

### ***Other Examinations and Screenings***

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for Type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues, or for abnormal spinal curvatures.

[See policy FFAA for more information.]



## **Special Health Concerns**

### ***Bacterial Meningitis***

Please see the district's website at [https://www.gwisd.us/vnews/display.v/ART/5d97505e1798d?in\\_archive=1](https://www.gwisd.us/vnews/display.v/ART/5d97505e1798d?in_archive=1) for information regarding meningitis.

**Note:** Entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 73.]

### ***Diabetes***

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### ***Food Allergies***

Parents should notify the district when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" found on the DSHS website at [Allergies and Anaphylaxis](#).

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at [Food Allergy Management Plan](#).

[See **Celebrations** on page 32 and policy FFAF for more information.]

### ***Seizures***

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder. .

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 20 and contact the school nurse for more information.]

## **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies FNCD and GKA for more information.]

## **Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures**

### **Physical and Mental Health Resources**

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

- The district full-time nurse
  - Rachael Clayton
  - District Nurse
  - 913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
  - [rclayton@gwisd.us](mailto:rclayton@gwisd.us)
  - 361-449-1914, ext. 1062.
- The campus full-time counselor
  - Nicole Galloway
  - GWES Counselor
  - 910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
  - [ngalloway@gwisd.us](mailto:ngalloway@gwisd.us)
  - 361-449-1914, ext. 1045.
- The local public health authority, Judge Jim Huff, which may be contacted at 361-449-2733, ext. 101.
- The local mental health authority, Coastal Plains Community Center, which may be contacted at the main line at 361-777-3991 or at the crisis line at 800-841-6467

### **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health**

The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. (LOCAL) policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at [GWISD Policy Online](#).

- Food and nutrition management: CO, COA, COB
- Wellness and Health Services: FFA
- Physical Examinations: FFAA

- Immunizations: FFAB
- Medical Treatment: FFAC
- Communicable Diseases: FFAD
- School-Based Health Centers: FFAE
- Care Plans: FFAF
- Crisis Intervention: FFB
- Trauma-informed Care: FFBA
- Student Support Services: FFC
- Student Safety: FFF
- Child Abuse and Neglect: FFG
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: FFH
- Freedom from Bullying: FFI

In addition, the District Improvement Plan details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health.

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

For further information regarding these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 10242

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 6 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available from the principal.

Notifications of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted at each campus' administrative office at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website at [SHAC](#).

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 3 and policies BDF and EHAA for more information.]

### **Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan**

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. For

questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan, please contact:

Dr. Roland Quesada

GWISD Superintendent

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[rquesada@gwisd.us](mailto:rquesada@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1000

## **Homework**

Students will receive the Homework and Grading System information from the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year.

## **Law Enforcement Agencies**

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if it is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances, the principal will:

- Verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question the student at school.
- Ordinarily make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- Ordinarily be present for the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a legally authorized person, the principal will verify the person's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the person's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will attempt to notify the parent, unless the legally authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a legally authorized person, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate district personnel in regards to a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[See policy GRAA(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Leaving Campus**

Remember that student attendance is crucial. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Also note that picking up a student early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Absent extenuating circumstances, students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent before any student leaves campus for any part of the school day.

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or authorized adult must come to the office and show identification to sign the student out. A campus representative will ask the student to report to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow any unescorted adult to go to the classroom or other area to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

- The same process applies to students in the high school if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school.
- Unless the parent directs district personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is permitted by his or her parent to leave campus unaccompanied, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied.
- If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

### **During Lunch**

Students are reminded that George West ISD policies regarding dress code and behavior remain in place during lunch, regardless of location. Those students returning to class late, more than twice in a six weeks period after lunch will lose the off-campus lunch privilege.

### **At Any Other Time During the School Day**

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Lost and Found**

A lost and found collection box is located in the campus office. A student who loses an item should check the lost and found box. The district discourages bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

### **Makeup Work**

#### **Makeup Work Because of Absence**

A teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or meeting subject or course requirements.

The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

The student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 24.]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

**Guidelines:**

- Students who miss work in class due to an absence (excused, unexcused or suspension) are permitted to make up work.
  - A student is required to make up all work missed while absent. Teachers will provide the student with a packet of missed work when a student returns from an absence.
  - For work assigned when a student is absent, one (1) day is given for each day missed up to a maximum of five (5) days, except for extenuating circumstances.
    - 1 day absent – 1 school day after return to school
    - 2 days absent – 2 school days after return to school
    - 3 days absent – 3 school days after return to school
    - 4 days absent – 4 school days after return to school
    - 5 days absent – 5 school days after return to school
- Ex. If absent on Monday, work is due on Wednesday.  
If absent Monday and Tuesday, work is due Friday.
- Work, projects, or tests assigned when a student is present will be taken immediately upon return to the next scheduled class. Teachers should announce major assignments or scheduled tests at least 2 days in advance; therefore students who are absent have a general idea as to what class work or scheduled tests are in progress during the absence. Some teacher discretion should be used in cases involving more severe situations, such as illnesses, etc.
  - Make-up tests **should** be scheduled before or after school. Make-up tests **may** be given during class at the teacher’s discretion. If a student is absent from a schedule make-up exam on two occasions, he/she **may** be given a zero for that exam.
  - A student should make prior arrangements with the teacher for making up missed work when he/she anticipates being absent (school activity, doctor/dental appointment, etc.).

- After an absence, students may contact the school to secure assignments which are not available from classmates with the understanding assignments may not be available until the end of the next school day.
- Exceptions for extenuation circumstances may be granted by the campus administration.

### **Late Work**

Late work is defined as any assignment that is not turned in on the day in which the assignment is due.

The purpose of the deadline is to set the expectation that students will learn to meet deadlines as a part of a real-life skill.

Late work may be penalized by subtracting 25 points per day the assignment is late. 4 days = 0.

### **DAEP Makeup Work**

If a high school student is enrolled in a foundation curriculum course at the time of removal to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), he or she will have an opportunity to complete the course before the beginning of the next school year. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work**

#### ***Alternative Means to Receive Coursework***

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

#### ***Opportunity to Complete Courses***

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX



Coordinator (see below), to the Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment:

Dr. Roland Quesada

GWISD Superintendent

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[rquesada@gwisd.us](mailto:rquesada@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1000.

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator
  - Dr. Roland Quesada
  - GWISD Superintendent
  - 913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
  - [rquesada@gwisd.us](mailto:rquesada@gwisd.us)
  - 361-449-1914, extension 1000
- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent
  - Dr. Roland Quesada
  - GWISD Superintendent
  - 913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
  - [rquesada@gwisd.us](mailto:rquesada@gwisd.us)
  - 361-449-1914, extension 1000

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD for more information.]

### **Nontraditional Academic Programs**

[See **Requirements for a Diploma.**]

## Parent and Family Engagement

### Working Together

Experience and research tell us that a child succeeds in education with good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. A parent's involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 45.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 361-449-1914 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 90.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers** on page 105 and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: GWISD Athletic Boosters, GWISD Band Boosters, and individual boosters of the many CATE organizations and clubs at the high school.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For more information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact:
  - Mrs. Sandra Musquez
  - GWISD Parent Liaison
  - 913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022
  - smusquez@gwisd.us
  - 361-449-1914, extension 1121
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and assisting the district in aligning local community values with health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See **School Health Advisory Council** on page 80 and policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA for more information.]

- Being aware of the school’s ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child’s emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the GWISD Board Room in the Administration building at 913 Houston Street. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting at the Administration building and online at [Board Agenda](#). [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

## **Parking and Parking Permits**

A student must present a valid driver’s license and proof of insurance to be eligible for a parking permit.

Students must request a parking permit to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year.

Students will not be permitted to:

- Speed
- Double-park
- Park across a white or yellow line
- Park in a fire lane
- Sit in parked cars during school hours

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these rules. The district may tow cars that are parked in violation of these rules.

The student parking lots are designated as follows:

- The parking lot on the east side of the campus in the lot closest to Houston and Bowie Streets is reserved for **Faculty**.
- **Seniors** will park on the south side (back) of the building closest to the main high school building and Ag classrooms.
- **Underclassmen** will park on the south side (back) of the campus in the lot furthest away from the main building and Ag classrooms.
- Students are not allowed to park in the north side (front) parking lot; it is reserved for **Visitors**.

## **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 9.]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day.

[See policy EC for more information.]

## **Prayer**

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt school activities. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **Promotion and Retention**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the district will consider:

- Teacher recommendation,
- Grades,
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments, and
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level standards.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade Level Classification** on page 63.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 66 and **Standardized Testing** on page 99.]

For the 2023-24 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat a course taken for high school credit that the student took and received credit for during the 2022-23 school year. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

## **Release of Students from School**

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 82.]

## **Remote Instruction**

The district may offer remote instruction when authorized by TEA.

All district policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and other expectations of student behavior will be enforced as applicable in a remote or virtual learning environment.

## Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every six weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher. [See **Working Together** on page 87 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See **Grading Guidelines** on page 63 and policy EIA(LOCAL) for more information.]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher. If the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 5 days. The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature will be accepted by the district, but parents are entitled to request a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

### 2023-2024 Progress Report and Report Card Dates

Marking Period	Progress Report Dates		Report Card Dates	
	Day	Date	Day	Date
1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	8/31/2023	Thursday	9/28/2023
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Tuesday	10/17/2023	Wednesday	11/08/2023
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Monday	12/04/2023	Wednesday	1/10/2024
4 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	1/30/2024	Thursday	2/22/2024
5 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	3/26/2024	Wednesday	4/24/2024
6 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	5/14/2024	TBA	Available for Pickup & Posted on the Parent Portal

## **Retaliation**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47.]

## **Safety**

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and in district vehicles is a high priority of the district. The cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by leaving notification in the black box located in the Commons Area of the high school.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

## **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

## **Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs**

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs.

## **Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

Periodically, the school will conduct preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### ***Fire Drill Bells***

3 bells	leave the building
1 bell	halt; stand at attention
2 bells	return to the classroom

### ***Tornado Drill Bells***

1 continuous bell	move quietly but quickly to the designated locations
2 bells	return to the classroom

## **Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed**

The district will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students enrolled in grades 7-12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7-12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

## **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.).

The district may consent to medical treatment, which includes dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent;
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary.
- The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee is unable to be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.
- Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

## **Emergency School Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that the district needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes

George West ISD uses **School Messenger**, a notification system using voice calls, emails or text messages. Messages will be sent for important school information, school closures due to weather, or other emergency information. Through the normal registration paperwork for your child, you will be asked for the best contact number or email for notifications. Please keep this information current to receive communications from George West ISD.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: radio and television announcements, voice calls, emails or text messaging.

Listen to the following stations for emergency closing announcements:

K-99	99.1 FM	Corpus Christi	(361) 560-5797 / (361) 299-1252
KICKER	105.7 FM	Beeville	(361) 358-1490 / (361) 358-1423
KKYX	680 AM	San Antonio	(210) 684-0068 / (210) 615-5471
Channel 3		Corpus Christi	(361) 855-6397 / (361) 986-8300
Channel 6		Corpus Christi	(361) 886-6100

[See **Automated Emergency Communications** on page 41 for more information.]

## **SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests**

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 99.]

## **Schedule Changes**

During the spring semester, students request courses to take for the following school year. To maximize budgets and resources, those requests are used to build the master schedule. Students should request courses that they need to fulfill their graduation requirements and are interested in. However, in some instances, students must make changes to the courses they requested. If a schedule change is needed, they must occur within the first 5 days of a semester. Dislike of a teacher, failing a class, wanting to be in a class with a friend, or disciplinary problems are not valid reason for a student/parent to request a schedule change. Students and parents may not request a specific teacher. All schedule change requests will be based on space available in the other class and may affect the rest of the student's schedule. Schedule Change Request forms can be picked up from the main office.

Schedule changes will be considered for the following reasons **only**:

- Sequence of courses is out of order.
- Failure of a course that must be repeated.
- Course needed for graduation or college entrance
- Incomplete schedule (missing class)
- Did not take pre-requisite class

**STUDENTS MUST FOLLOW THEIR CURRENT SCHEDULE UNTIL THEY HAVE RECEIVED A NEW SCHEDULE FROM THE COUNSELING OFFICE!**

## **School Facilities**

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's asbestos management plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact:

Mr. Ruben Pena

GWISD Asbestos Coordinator

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

rpena@gwisd.us



361-449-1914 extension 1010

### Food and Nutrition Services

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Some students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and, eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

To apply for free or reduced price meal services, contact:

Mrs. Sharon Clifton

GWISD Child Nutrition Director

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[sclifton@gwisd.us](mailto:sclifton@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1060

[See policy CO for more information.]

<i>Meal</i>	<i>Full Price</i>	<i>Reduced Price</i>	<i>Free</i>
Breakfast	\$1.00	\$0.30	\$0
Lunch	\$2.25	\$0.40	\$0

George West ISD utilizes Lunch Money Now. This online program allows parents to add money to their child's meal account as well as check their purchase history. Parents may sign up at any time using the link found on the GWISD website under [Cafeteria](#).

Parents should continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student may continue to purchase meals according to the grace period set by the school board. The district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance and an application for free or reduced meals.

If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

The following information is published as required by the USDA for participation in the National School Lunch Program:

"In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

“Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

“To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. **fax:**

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. **email:**

[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

The responsible state agency that administers the program is the [Texas Department of Agriculture](https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us) (<https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us>), which can be reached at (800) TELL-TDA (835-5832) or (800) 735-2989 (TTY).

The local agency that administers the program is the district. See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator, ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and superintendent for other concerns about discrimination.

### ***Vending Machines***

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies for food service, including the guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the campus principal. [See policy FFA for more information.]

### **Pest Management Plan**

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area.

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact:

Mr. Profirio Sanchez

GWISD IPM coordinator

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

361-449-1914, extension 1010

### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities. Whether a school activity is on or off district premises, students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day. Misbehavior will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

### **Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit:

Monday through Friday from 7:45 a. m. to 4:00 p. m.

The librarian is glad to help students with reference and research problems. Teachers who need the library opened for additional hours should make arrangements with the librarian. Most books are checked out for two weeks and may be renewed at the end of that time for an additional two weeks. If further renewal is requested, the book must be placed in the stacks for one day. Certain books which teachers are using for a special class or research work may be put on reserve at the request of the teacher or the discretion of the librarian. All reserved books are checked out for a time determined by the teacher and the librarian so that the greatest number of students may use them. Some reference books are not checked out.

Books will be due two weeks after they have been checked out. An overdue list will be posted near the library door. Books must be turned in on or before due day or a fine of ten cents per day will be charged. This excludes Saturday and Sunday.

The day the fine is paid counts, but the day it is due does not count. Fines are not charged for the days a pupil is absent from school, providing the student has an excused absence, but he/she must turn in the book of the first day of his/her return to school. After a reasonable time, an overdue book will be considered lost and the pupil in whose name it is checked out must pay for a new book. A student who damages a book beyond ordinary wear will be required to pay for a new copy. Students are responsible for books checked out in their names.

Magazines are not checked out.

Teachers should check out audio-visual equipment and audio-visual software personally, or the teacher should send a student with a written request for said equipment to the librarian.

No food or drinks are allowed in the library.

Students are requested to remain quiet in the library for the benefit of all students.

### **Use of Hallways during Class Time**

During class time, loitering or standing in the halls is not permitted, and a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Use by Students Before and After School**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

- GWISD Cafetorium
- High School Office via the Front Door

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

### **Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups**

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

### **School-Sponsored Field Trips**

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

## **Searches**

### **Searches in General**

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

District officials may search students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for

example, reasonable suspicion or voluntary consent or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicionless security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

### **District Property**

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

Students are responsible for any item found in district property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Metal Detectors**

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

### **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** on page 54 and policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Trained Dogs**

The district may use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

### **Drug Testing**

All 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the extracurricular activities of athletics, band, and cheerleading, will be drug tested at least once yearly upon entering into the extracurricular program. Random testing will be conducted on at least 5 students from junior high school and at least 15 students from high school, a minimum of 5 times per year on random dates after the initial testing. The dates will be selected by the testing facility.

All students in extra-curricular activities of band, athletics, and cheerleading at George West Junior High and High School, and their parents or guardian, will be asked to sign a drug-testing

consent form as a condition to participating in extra-curricular activities. No student may participate in practice or competition until the consent form is properly executed and on file with the campus principal or athletic director. Each consenting student will be issued an identification number. The campus principal or athletic director will maintain the names of the students with their corresponding identification number. A representative from the testing laboratory will take samples to the testing laboratory and retrieve results. All specimens will be identified by the student's identification number. (See George West I.S.D. Drug Testing Program)

Parents of students identified through any screening programs as needing treatment or further examination shall be advised of the need and referred to appropriate health agencies.

[See **Steroids** on page 75.]

### **Vehicles on Campus**

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

### **Sexual Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 47.]

### **Special Programs**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact:

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1042

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

### **Standardized Testing**

#### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)**

##### ***Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs***

Certain students – some with disabilities and some classified as English learners – may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PGP).

Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

### **Students in Foster Care**

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

If you have questions, please contact the district's foster care liaison:

Sandra Musquez

Parent Engagement

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

smusquez@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1121

[See **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State** on page 16.]

### **Students Who are Homeless**

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison:

Mrs. Sandra Musquez

Parent Engagement

913 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

smusquez@gwisd.us

361-449-1914, extension 1121

[See **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 100.]

### **Student Speakers**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: high school home varsity football games, student extracurricular banquets, and honor assemblies. If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

[See **Graduation** on page 65 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies and policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities.]

## Summer School

Credit for summer work will be permitted only if the work is done in a high school that is approved by the Texas Education Agency. Work done under a private teacher will not be allowed for credit. Courses completed in summer school will be counted toward graduation. A transcript from another school in which summer work has been taken will be transferred to the student's permanent record in its entirety, since it is resident work.

## Tardies

A student is marked tardy to class if he or she is not in the assigned room when the tardy bell rings. A student arriving after the bell with a pass from another member of the staff is not tardy. Tardies are tracked and consequences will increase if tardiness continues in accordance with the ***Student Code of Conduct***. Students tardy for the 1<sup>st</sup> period bell must report to the office to obtain a pass to class. In general, students more than 10 minutes late will be counted absent.

\*\*\*More than 2 tardies in 6<sup>th</sup> period during a three week period will result in loss of off campus lunch privileges for a three week period.

\*\*\*Tardy Count will start over at the beginning of each six weeks to give students the opportunity to demonstrate adherence to campus expectations of being in class before the tardy bell rings.

## Greater than 10 Minutes

A student who is tardy by more than 10 minutes without proper documentation from the administration, faculty, or staff is to be recorded with an Unexcused Absence in TxEIS and referred to the office for disciplinary consequences.

- ***Tardy counts will start over at the beginning of each six weeks. If a student misses a lunch detention, the missed lunch detention will double.***
- ***Students who show the inability to return from lunch on time, may lose their off-campus lunch privileges.***

## Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials

The district provides textbooks and other approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat any books with care and place covers on them, as directed by the teacher. The district may also provide electronic textbooks and technological equipment to students, depending on course objectives.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## Transfers

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.



The superintendent is authorized to investigate approve transfers between schools.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments**, on page 15, **Bullying**, on page 29, and **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**, on page 17, for other transfer options.]

## **Transportation**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. The coach or sponsor may request that the written request must be approved by the principal. [See **School-Sponsored Field Trips** on page 96 for more information.]

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and to any students who are experiencing homelessness. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually. Any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the driver and all passengers, students must district vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

A parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, contact Mrs. Kim Turner (361) 449-1914 ext. 1061 or [ktturner@gwisd.us](mailto:ktturner@gwisd.us).

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked, or students may be placed on the district's discipline bus.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

## **Vandalism**

Taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Video Cameras**

For safety purposes, the district uses video and audio recording equipment to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice to before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, speak with the principal or superintendent, who the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.

[See policy EHBAF(LOCAL) for more information.]

[For video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms, see **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 5.]

## **Visitors to the School**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office to sign in and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. All visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Individuals may visit classrooms during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher. *Due to current pandemic concerns, visitors may not go to classrooms or the cafeteria until further notice.* Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

[For video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms, see **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 5.]

### **Unauthorized Persons**

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

### **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

#### ***Business, Civic, and Youth Groups***

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

George West High School invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students. Approval must be obtained from the principal or designee. A place will be provided for interested students and representatives to share information and visit.

#### ***Visitors in the Cafeteria***

Parents or family members wishing to eat lunch with a student in the school cafeteria must sign in at the high school office before going to the cafeteria. Visitors not complying with this request may be asked to leave the school premises. Visitor Passes are required.

### **Volunteers**

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:

Mrs. Marianne Peters

GWES Principal

910 Houston Street, George West, TX 78022

[mpeters@gwisd.us](mailto:mpeters@gwisd.us)

361-449-1914, extension 1042

The district does not require state criminal history background checks for volunteers who are parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district.

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, other volunteers will be subject to a state criminal history background check, and the volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

### **Voter Registration**

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

### **Withdrawing from School**

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form may be obtained from the registrar and must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the athletic director for athletic gear and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the cafeteria to ensure a zero balance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the completed withdrawal form will be given to the student/parent, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

## GLOSSARY

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ACT**, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ACT-Aspire** refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

**ARD** stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance review committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

**CPS** stands for Child Protective Services.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

**DFPS** is the Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

**DPS** stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**EOC** (end-of-course) **assessments** are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History.

**ESSA** is the Every Student Succeeds Act.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** stands for individualized education program and is the written record of the prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

**IGC** is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**PGP** stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**PSAT** is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

**SAT** refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

**STAAR Alternate 2** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the STAAR EOC assessments is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAC** stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**TSI** stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

**TxVSN** stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

## APPENDIX I: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING POLICY

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit <http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/827?filter=FFI>. Below is the text of George West ISD's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date that this handbook was finalized for this school year.

### STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING FFI(LOCAL)

Adopted on 10/08/2017

Note: This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyber-bullying.

For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

#### **Bullying Prohibited**

The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

#### Examples

Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

#### **Retaliation**

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

#### Examples

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

#### **False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### **Timely Reporting**

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

#### **Reporting Procedures**

##### Student Report

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures



	allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.
Employee Report	Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.
Report Format	A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.
<b>Notice of Report</b>	When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.
<b>Prohibited Conduct</b>	The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.
<b>Investigation of Report</b>	The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.
<b>Concluding the Investigation</b>	Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.  The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.
<b>Notice to Parents</b>	If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.
<b>District Action</b> Bullying	If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

<i>Discipline</i>	<p>A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.</p> <p>The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.</p>
<i>Corrective Action</i>	<p>Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.</p>
<i>Transfers</i>	<p>The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.</p>
<i>Counseling</i>	<p>The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.</p>
Improper Conduct	<p>If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.</p>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p>To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.</p>
<b>Appeal</b>	<p>A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.</p>
<b>Records Retention</b>	<p>Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).</p>
<b>Access to Policy and Procedures</b>	<p>This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.</p>